

Message Text

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42

ACTION SIL-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8391

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 996

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PGOV KS

SUBJECT: ALLEGED REFERENDUM IRREGULARITIES

REF: SEOUL 0946

1. IN WAKE OF REFERENDUM VOTING FEB 12, LOCAL PRESS HAS REPORTED VARIOUS NDP AND OTHER CLAIMS ABOUT VOTING IRREGULARITIES. IT IS DOUBTFUL, HOWEVER, WHETHER EXPECTED CHARGES AND RESPONSES WILL HAVE ANY IMPACT.

2. NDP PRESIDENT KIM YONG-SAM TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE BELIEVES GOVERNMENT'S FIGURES OF TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTERS PARTICIPATING IN REFERENDUM IS DOUBLE THAT OF ACTUAL TURN-OUT. KIM INTENDS TO TRY TO KEEP PRESS ATTENTION FOCUSED ON ELECTION IRREGULARITIES AND TO CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE. HE ALSO CLAIMS REFERENDUM HAS NO CREDIBILITY, AT LEAST IN SEOUL AREA.

3. SECRETARY GENERAL OF NDP, YU CHI-SONG, TOLD PRESS THAT NDP MEMBERS OBSERVED ONE REPRESENTATIVE POLLING PLACE IN EACH CITY AND IN PROVINCES. IN SEOUL, NDP UNOFFICIAL POLL WATCHERS ALLEGEDLY COUNTED 1,593 VOTERS ENTERING POLLING PLACE WHILE ROKG RECORDED TURN-OUT OF 3,287 PERSONS VOTING. YU ALSO NOTED ELIGIBLE NUMBER OF VOTERS IN CHONGNO DISTRICT, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS DOUBLE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS PARTICIPATING IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS ONE YEAR AGO.

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4. LOCAL PRESS HAS ALSO COVERED CLAIM OF ONE ALLEGED DRP MEMBER (A TEACHER) WHO STATED THAT HE VOTED ON SEVERAL DIFFERENT BALLOTS ON WEDNESDAY. DRP HAS DISOWNED HIM PUBLICLY, HOWEVER. NDP ASSEMBLYMAN KIM UN-HA HAS BEEN CHARGED BY INCHON PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE WITH VIOLATING REFERENDUM LAW BY CLAIMING "FALSELY" THAT BALLOT BOXES WERE STUFFED IN FAVOR OF ROKG. ACCORDING TO PRESS, DRP CLAIMS THAT REFERENDUM WAS CONDUCTED "IN FAIRER AND FREER ATMOSPHERE THAN ANY OTHER ELECTION IN PAST."
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